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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

★ AUG 21 1937

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of NBC radio stations, Monday, August 16, 1937.

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No doubt you have all heard the story about the boy who asked so many questions that finally his father told him to "keep still, you ask too many questions." The truth of the matter is, the boy had dad cornered and he could not answer the questions and so took that way of getting out of it. If you don't ask questions how are you going to find out the things you want to know. In the Horticultural Division of the Department we get thousands and thousands of letters from all over the country, asking for information on all subjects that we ever heard of and some that we have never heard of. Many, in fact most, of these letters require a direct letter answer. Some of them can be answered simply by mailing the party making the inquiry a bulletin or printed circular. Occasionally we get such a flood of inquiries on a particular subject that we have to get out a form letter that can be simply slipped into an envelope and mailed.

As you folks know our Farmers' Bulletin series covers a very wide range of subjects, but we have found a need for something smaller and simpler even than the Farmers' Bulletins. To fill this need we have resorted to the leaflet series. Formerly we had much of this information in mimeograph or typewritten form so that we could simply fold a copy with a brief letter and send it along. Just recently we have edited thirty or forty of these circulars and they are now in the hands of the printer, in fact quite a number of them have been printed and are ready for use.

This group covering what we call the minor vegetable crops are numbered from 120 to 141 and those on sash greenhouses, carrots, table beets, spinach, horse radish, cauliflower, eggplant, pumpkins and squashes, rhubarb field culture and rhubarb forcing, are all ready for distribution. Among those that are coming along are chicory and endive, turnips and rutabagas, peppers, garlic, water cress and several others. When this series is completed it will make quite a nice little library of information on the vegetable crops of lesser commercial importance.

The same plan of getting out leaflets is being followed with certain of the fruits and the ornamentals, but as I said these leaflets are mainly for answering your questions and to save writing long letters. The leaflets have the advantage over letters in that they contain a few pictures and illustrations which aid materially in grasping the ideas set forth in the printed matter. I like plenty of pictures along with my reading matter and am of the opinion that if the boy who asked "too many questions" had been given plenty of books and magazines containing pictures he never would have asked all those questions. Any way, we have illustrated the leaflets and we believe this little series will be a great help in getting brief, concise information to any of you who are looking for that kind of information.

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Since I talked to you last week the letters have continued to pour into the Department asking about the cause and remedy for the tomato diseases that are so prevalent this season. Owing to the fact that there are at least five or six diseases that are causing the loss of the tomato plants, I would suggest that you send samples to your State college or experiment station for inspection. Most likely your county agent, if you have a county agent in your county, can tell you what the trouble is and what to do for it. As I told you recently brief information on tomato diseases can be found in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1338 and while the mischief has now largely been done for this season it is a good plan to get the bulletin and read up upon the whole disease control matter and be ready to start off right next season, but don't forget that in an emergency and when you want information quickly your county agent and your State Experiment Station and College workers can be reached in much shorter time than it takes to send a letter to Washington and get a reply. Our workers each and every one has his or her own job laid out for them so that answering correspondence is a secondary duty. In my own case, it is my job to collect this information and pass it on to you and that is why I am telling you about the leaflet series. If there are any of the subjects that I have mentioned on which you want information let me hear from you but please don't simply ask for the whole series. Be specific and by all means write or print your name and address plainly.

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